



## Diverse Business Development Program

Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2025	
<b>Lead Division:</b> Business and Community Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Loan <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Credit <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance

### **Introduction**

**Background Information:** The Diverse Business Development (DBD) program is designed to support capacity building of diverse non-profit organizations and minority, women, disabled, LGBT, and veteran business development through direct assistance to nonprofit organizations in Wisconsin. The funding is intended to promote investment and job retention and creation in diverse communities and underserved markets by increasing access to capital and business development training opportunities.

**Program's Purpose:** The program is designed to support diverse organizations and minority, women, disabled, LGBT, and veteran business development through direct assistance to nonprofit organizations as well as providing capacity building.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

**Eligible Applicants:** DBD applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a not-for-profit organization, to include nonprofit entities, units of government, educational institutions, community organizations, foundations, Tribal entities, or non-profit entities acting as a fiscal agent on behalf of another organization.
- Provide business financing, training, and/or technical assistance to the diverse business community.
- Have demonstrated professional capacity, financial stability and viability, and a demonstrated need.

**Eligible Activities:** DBD grants can fund the following activities. Costs are only eligible to be applied to grant and matching fund expenses after WEDC approval.

- Operational expenses related to the project and provision of technical assistance to businesses.
- Funding to businesses related to the project.

**Matching:** Matching funds are not required.

### **Available Incentives**

**FY25:** \$500,000

**Award Sizes:** The minimum DBD grant amount is \$15,000. The maximum DBD grant amount is \$50,000.

**Awards per Applicant:** Applicants may receive one award per fiscal year.



## **Activities and Expected Outcomes**

Award eight organizations to support 50 businesses.

**Impact:** Build capacity of diverse non-profit organizations and support minority, women, disabled, LGBT, and veteran business development in Wisconsin. The funding is intended to promote investment and job retention and creation in diverse communities and underserved markets by increasing access to capital and business development training opportunities via our non-profit partners.

### **Metrics:**

- Leverage – Total.
- Pass-through Businesses Assisted (technical).
- Pass-through Businesses Assisted (financial), if pass-through loans or grants.
- Pass-through Leverage Total, if pass-through loans.
- Pass-through Job Creation, if pass-through loans.
- Pass-through Job Retention, if pass-through loans.
- Performance Milestones, if applicable.

## **Application Guideline**

**Timeline:** The Diverse Business Development program has a continuous application process.

**Review Considerations:** WEDC may take the following into account when considering a DBD award:

- Ability to promote investment and job retention and creation in diverse communities and underserved markets.
- Ability to increase access to capital and business development training opportunities.
- Extent to which the applicant organization is owned or managed by individuals representing diverse communities.

**How to Apply:** An interested applicant should contact a WEDC Account Manager to determine if their project is right for the program. Upon review of the project, and alignment with eligibility criteria, an applicant will be invited to submit their application through Network Wisconsin.

**Award Process:** A WEDC underwriter will be assigned to review each recommended award and go through the award review process.

**Performance Reporting:** Recipients must submit periodic reports on project activities and the number of businesses technically assisted where applicable, and any other contract deliverable.

WEDC annually selects awards on a sample basis for an audit. All backup to the performance report and financial records must be maintained by the Recipient for at least three (3) years after the last performance report is due.



WEDC may impose additional reporting requirements to evaluate project performance and to ensure compliance with contract deliverables.

## **Helpful Information**

### **Definitions:**

"Diverse Business" - minority, women, disabled, LGBT, and veteran owned businesses.

## **Revision History**

### **Program Inception – Fiscal Year 2012**

- 07/01/2017: Simplified program due to transition of Minority Business Chambers to Key Strategic Partners during FY18.
- 07/01/2018: Simplified eligibility criteria to expand qualifying organizations.
- 07/01/2019: Clarified performance reporting requirements.
- 04/23/2020: Authorized use of grant funds to provide direct financial assistance to businesses during the public health emergency.
- 07/01/2020: Changed program name; eliminated temporary provisions of public health emergency initiative.
- 07/01/2022: Expands program description to include disabled and capacity-building for nonprofits; Adds Ally Grant Pilot.
- 07/01/2023: Removes Ally Grant Pilot.